

Cosponsors Legislation to Expand Development of New Technologies to Reduce Drunk Driving Crashes

Washington D.C. – Thursday, Harry Teague announced that he is cosponsoring a bill aimed at reducing drunk driving. The Research of Alcohol Detection Systems for Stopping Alcohol-related Fatalities Everywhere (ROADS SAFE) Act of 2010 (H.R. 4890) would provide funding for researchers to develop possible in-car devices that can prevent a person from starting their vehicle if their blood alcohol level is too high. Teague announced his support for the bill as he met with the New Mexico chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).

“Part of my commitment to keeping our communities safe is to address the issue of drunk driving. New Mexico has seen success in reducing the number of DUI fatalities through in-vehicle technology to prevent drunk driving but we need to utilize all available resources to continue to combat this dangerous statistic,” said Harry Teague. “There are people and organizations out there coming up with innovative ways to make sure no one ever becomes the victim of a drunk driving accident again and we should put our full support behind them to ensure their success. I am proud to have another opportunity to work with Senator Udall to take a New Mexico law that will save lives and make it the law of the land.”

The ROADS SAFE act includes \$12 million a year for five years to fund the research and development of technologies that will stop a person from drunk driving. Some of the preventative methods being researched include an engine start button that can determine Blood Alcohol Content and sensors that monitor the driver’s breath or eye-movements. New Mexico Senator Tom Udall sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

"The ROADS SAFE Act is about eliminating drunk driving, and this bill is one of the steps that will make this possible in our lifetime," said Lora Lee Ortiz, Executive Director of New Mexico's Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). "Everyone involved in this initiative's basic interest is saving lives and it's commendable that so many are coming together to come up with a solution."

Last year, drunk driving killed 11,773 people nationwide and caused 114 DUI fatalities in New Mexico. According to a study by MADD, New Mexico ranked #25 out all states in the past year for drunk driving incidents, with 32% of the total traffic deaths being DUI related.

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